



DATE: February 19, 2019
TO: Human Services Committee
FROM: Ben Shaiken, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy, The Alliance
RE: H.B. 7093 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Good morning Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, Senator Logan, Representative Case and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Ben Shaiken, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy at the Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide advocacy organization representing nonprofits, with a membership of more than 300 community organizations and associations. Nonprofits deliver essential services to more than half a million people each year and employ almost 14% of Connecticut's workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony with regard to **H.B. 7093 An Act Establishing a Task Force to Increase Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities**.

H.B. 7093 proposes to create taskforce to study how to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities, including expanding existing employment assistance programs for people with disabilities and establishing financial incentives for businesses to employ more people with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits employment discrimination of people with disabilities, and studies have shown that employing people with disabilities benefits businessesⁱ as a result of lower turnover, increased productivity and access to a broader pool of skilled workersⁱⁱ. In addition, businesses are entitled to the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) if they hire individuals with disabilities.

With the unemployment rate at 9% and the labor force participation rate at 20.5% for people with disabilities, compared with an unemployment rate of 4.2% and a labor force participation rate of 68.3% for people without disabilities, The Alliance encourages the legislature to enact policies expanding the employment assistance program and to establish financial incentives for businesses to employ more people with disabilities, rather than create a taskforce to study the matter further.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

ⁱ <https://classic.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/CI1213BETTERBOTTOMLINE.PDF>

ⁱⁱ <https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=http://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/employing-people-with-disabilities.aspx&httpsredir=1&article=1292&context=edicollect>